



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
December 6, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 pm.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Deirdre Kvale, Mike Feldmann, Jahn Dyvik, and Gina Joyce

Staff Present: City Administrator: Scott Weske; and City Attorney: John Thames

Absent: None

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Kvale, seconded by Joyce, to approve the agenda, as presented. Ayes: all.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

Brian Miller, 295 Lakeview Avenue – Mr. Miller commended the Council and staff for all the research they have done related to the whole Fire Department situation. He stated that he felt what was presented on November 17, 2022 was outstanding and noted that it was great to see past Mayors speak to the issue. Of all the options that were presented, to him there are only two viable options - extending the current contract if Orono is willing, or that everyone heads towards a Fire District concept, which he feels is clearly the route they should go. He would also be fine with retaining the City's ownership of Fire Station 1 and working with Wayzata as a good alternate plan. He mentioned that at last week's Orono City Council meeting, Council member Johnson had made a comment that Long Lake was willing to pay \$160,000 a year versus paying \$70,000 to Orono. Mr. Miller stated that he believes everyone knows that implementing a Fire District will cost the City more money and explained that he did not care. He explained that he did not think \$160,000 was the issue and that concern is more about who the City is looking to partner with. In his opinion, there are people in Orono that are not operating above board but he feels the Long Lake representatives have been 'golden' and have done a great job. He observed that what needs to be made clear to the public is that this situation is not the fault of Long Lake and that fault should rest on the shoulders of Orono. The Long Lake Fire Department is not just an issue of heritage, as it is a big part of the City's identity. He reiterated that he did not feel the issue was about the money and admitted that he did not understand all the details of moving forward with a Fire District and whether that meant that the Long Lake Fire Department name would be lost, but even if it were, he felt that would be more favorable than 'turning over the keys' to the current people in Orono. He stated that if this was the private sector, he cannot imagine doing business with people who operate in the manner that Orono has. He reflected that he believes the majority of the residents agree with his thoughts on the Fire Department and that things should not be turned over to Orono.

Sam Rettinger, 425 Lake Street – Mr. Rettinger commented that he wanted to make sure that the City would have a public hearing regarding the Fire Department before any decisions are made. He asked that the City advertise it well and noted that he would expect more than 100 people would show up for the hearing. He stated that moving everything to Orono is a bad deal and outlined some of the things that he felt were questionable in their past actions. He recalled that he served on the Fire Department for 12 years and their response time went from five minutes up to 15

minutes when they transitioned to the current situation, and emphasized how important he felt faster response times were for the Department. He indicated that he feels the City of Orono had bought the friendship of some of the members of the Fire Department and had also made them various promises. He outlined a situation in the past where he was contacted by the Mayor of Orono who wanted to know why no one on the Fire Department wanted a certain individual as Chief. It was clear to him that he had contacted everyone on the Fire Department to promote an unqualified person as Chief. He noted that Long Lake had previously owned all the Fire Department's equipment and the building, and asked what the City currently owned.

Council member Kvale responded that the City currently generally owned 50%.

Mr. Rettinger recalled that prior to the current agreement, Long Lake owned everything, and the percentage of what was paid for operations was based on a calculation of miles of road and valuation of property. The City only needs three vehicles including two trucks and a pick-up truck to cover the City. The City is paying about 20% of all this equipment for use to cover Orono, such as tankers, which are unnecessary in Long Lake because Long Lake has water. The Fire Department also does not need mountain climbing equipment or motor homes to serve as command centers.

Mayor Miner noted that the Rettinger Funeral Home is involved in memorial services for Bob Hardin later in the week.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Closed Session Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, Subd. 3 (c) (3): Develop or Consider Offers/Counteroffers for the Purchase or Sale of Real Property Located at 340 Willow Drive N and Other Fire Department Property

A motion was made by Miner, seconded by Kvale, to move the meeting into a Closed Session Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, Subd. 3 (c) (3): Develop or Consider Offers/Counteroffers for the Purchase or Sale of Real Property Located at 340 Willow Drive N and Other Fire Department Property at 5:14 p.m. Ayes: all.

A motion was made by Miller, seconded by Dyvik, to adjourn the Closed Session.

City Attorney Thames reported that the City Council had just adjourned a Closed Session meeting held pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, Subd. 3 (c) (3) to develop or consider offers/counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real property located at 340 Willow Drive N and other Fire Department property, and staff had been given appropriate direction from the Council.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske
City Administrator